



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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**H.B. 6015: AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES BY ADULT
ADOPTED PERSONS.**

Planning and Development Committee

Submitted by: Stephen A. Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW, Executive Director

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On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, CT chapter representing over 2,300 members we call upon the Planning and Development Committee to support H.B. 6105 to provide adoptees with an original birth certificate.

NASW-CT supports restoring the right of all adult adoptees to receive a copy of their original birth certificate upon reaching the age of 18 years or older and receive information on their biological parent's health information. Earlier legislation in 2014 gave such rights to those who were adopted in 1983 or later and this bill will capture those who are pre-1983 thus giving all adoptees the same rights.

The NASW Social Work Speaks, 11th edition, the association's policy statements, under Foster Care and Adoption calls for "the needs and rights of adult adoptees to have access to legally available information regarding their birth and family medical record". We believe that now is the time for this right to be made legal in Connecticut for all adoptees.

Social workers and other health care providers who work with adult adoptees can be hindered in their treatment of the individual due to a lack of biological health information. Proper treatment is predicated on having a complete assessment of the individual's social, emotional, physical and biological factors. However, with an adult adoptee the biological factors are not known, leaving a health care provider without key knowledge that may directly affect both prevention and acute treatment options. Such lack of key information due to an unnecessary legal barrier should be seen by all as unacceptable.

Psychologically it can be stressful on an adult adoptee to not have full information on their biological parent's health conditions, nor to have an original birth certificate. There

are many circumstances where an original birth certificate is requested and with each of these requests the adult adoptee is reminded that unlike all other's they lack an original certificate, that theirs is an unequal status. The same is true on requests for a family health history. For some adult adoptees this can be a painful experience that is repeated over and over.

There are protections that can be put in place that provides birth parents with protections by having the parent indicate whether they want to allow the adult adoptee to contact them and if so whether that contact may be direct or through an intermediary. Such protections should offset any concerns birth parents may have as to confidentiality. Surely, this is a better approach than use of the various products now on the market that provides for family history searches.

It is in the best interest, physical health wise and psychologically, for the adult adoptee that H.B. 6105 is passed favorably in Committee and ultimately passed in both chambers. This is a bill that has been a long time requested and the time for final successful action is now!